
Title: The Poet's Epilogue

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Two black robed
figures moved
silently through the
snow swept streets of
the small township,
cloaks bound tightly
against the chill wind.
The first, seemingly
the leader, moved with
a light but purposeful
stride, while the
second followed
unsteadily, casting
nervous looks at the
dark windows of the
nearby dwellings.
At last, the two came
to a halt in an open
space beyond the last
outskirt buildings of
the town. The moon
shone down where
they stood, bathing
them in a radiant pool
of silver light. After
a long silence, the
leader turned to his
companion, who spoke
nervously.

"Master, should we
not depart from here?
You said yourself that
you are in grave
danger, and we do
noteven have the aid of
the Archons!"

"Hush, Thehelps. You do
not understand. I
cannot flee this
encounter, nor can I
sacrifice the
Archons, for they are
the key to my
survival."

The leader paused,

and smiled, and
turned from his
companion to face the
darkness. As he did
this, he shouted at the
shadows in a clear,
unflustered tone.

"Astaroth! You may
show yourself now,
for there is no more
need to hide from me."

As he spoke, the
shadows outside the
moon's light seemed to
coalesce into two
forms, which moved
into the light. One
spoke, its voice harsh
and cruel.

"It is time, Nosfentor.
Have you prepared
yourself for death?"

The leader turned
back to his companion.

"When we first met,
the shadows of your
soul were a sanctum,
in which a piece of
Myself could rest.
This is all that binds
you to me, and now I
must take it back, for
I have need of its
power."

As he spoke, the
leader reached out, his
hand passing into his
companion as if he
were merely mist.
Suddenly, both
shuddered in pain,
and then the
companion fell
screaming to the
ground.

"Run, Thelps!" the
leader shouted.

"Perhaps one day a
piece of me shall find
you once again."

The companion turned
and fled, leaving his

master to face the two
shadows.

The last image he saw
of his leader was a
burst of light as the
two shadows leapt
forward, silver claws
glinting as they
prepared for the
attack.

Later, when others
arrived upon the
scene, they found no
sign of any combat,
save a spray of scarlet
blood and a black cloak
lying empty in the
snow.

Perhaps a time will
come
For all thing to cease
to be
Every mother, every
child
Every flower and
every tree.

For happiness is far
too fleeting
For hardships are
endured too long
For the foes we must
fight are too
many
And lethargy stifles
joy and song

But though the joyful
hope of change has
vanished
Though the blood of
elders stains the
ground
Though I may have
long departed
Within these words I
can be forever found.

-Stephanos